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South Africa: Dynamics and Implications of Racial Demographic Trends [redacted]

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A Research Paper

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ALA 83-10131
September 1983

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Key Terms

- The *age structure* shows the proportion of males and females at different age levels, usually measured in 5-year age groups and portrayed as a population pyramid. The shape of the age structure is the cumulative result of past trends in fertility, mortality, and migration (see figures 4 to 7 for examples).
- *Fertility,* or *the birth rate,* is measured by the number of births per 1,000 of population per year. The birth rate depends on economic development, education, the social and economic status of women, and the age structure.
- *The infant mortality rate (IMR)* is the number of deaths of those under one year of age per 1,000 live births in a given year.
- *Life expectancy* is the average number of years a person would live according to current mortality trends.
- *Migration* is the net difference between immigration and emigration in a given period.
- *Mortality,* or *the death rate,* is measured by the number of deaths per 1,000 of population for a given year. Mortality depends on the population's standard of living, its level of health care, and the age structure.
- *Natural increase* measures the excess of births over deaths.

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South Africa: Dynamics and Implications of Racial Demographic Trends

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A Research Paper

This paper was prepared by
Office of African and Latin American Analysis.
It was coordinated with the Directorate of
Operations. Comments and queries are welcome
and may be directed to the Chief, Regional Issues,
Africa Division, ALA

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South Africa: Dynamics and Implications of Racial Demographic Trends

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Key Judgments
Information available as of 11 August 1983 was used in this report.

An examination of the dynamics of population growth in South Africa demonstrates vividly the dimensions of the "black problem" faced by the white government. The black population—already 73.5 percent of the total—is growing rapidly while the birth rates of all other population groups have dropped sharply. Besides the whites, these other groups include the Colored and Indian communities, to which white leaders are now looking for important political support. The government will not be able to reverse these demographic trends, which are dividing South Africa into two societies: one black, with a growth pattern and an age structure strikingly similar to those in the Third World, and one nonblack, with a population profile increasingly like those of the advanced industrialized world.

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The implications of these population trends include increased pressures on the land, the cities, and the educational system. The South African economy almost certainly will be unable to generate enough jobs to absorb the annual addition of black entrants to the labor force, and we do not expect the government to develop a concerted program to create more jobs for blacks. As a result, black unemployment—already about 30 percent—will grow substantially. Even if the economy were to grow at a rate of 5 percent annually between now and the year 2000—a considerably faster pace than we expect—black unemployment would rise to at least 35 percent. Black population growth will also aggravate an already serious housing shortage and severely strain the country's overburdened public services.

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Demographic trends will also make it more difficult for the white-dominated South African power structure to enforce the complex system of laws designed to maintain white control. Even now, the segment of the white population that has the skills needed to run the government, private enterprise, and other key South African institutions is remarkably small. Eventually, there may not be enough qualified whites to do all these things.

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In our view, the most disruptive single force is likely to be young black males, whose ranks are expanding at a rate of 3.0 percent annually. Dissidents from this group largely sustained the months of rioting that began in Soweto in June 1976, and they probably also provide the bulk of recruits for South African black nationalist groups. Even though the government's security apparatus is likely to be able to thwart any internal challenge in the near term, the potential for violence and eventual instability will increase over the long run.

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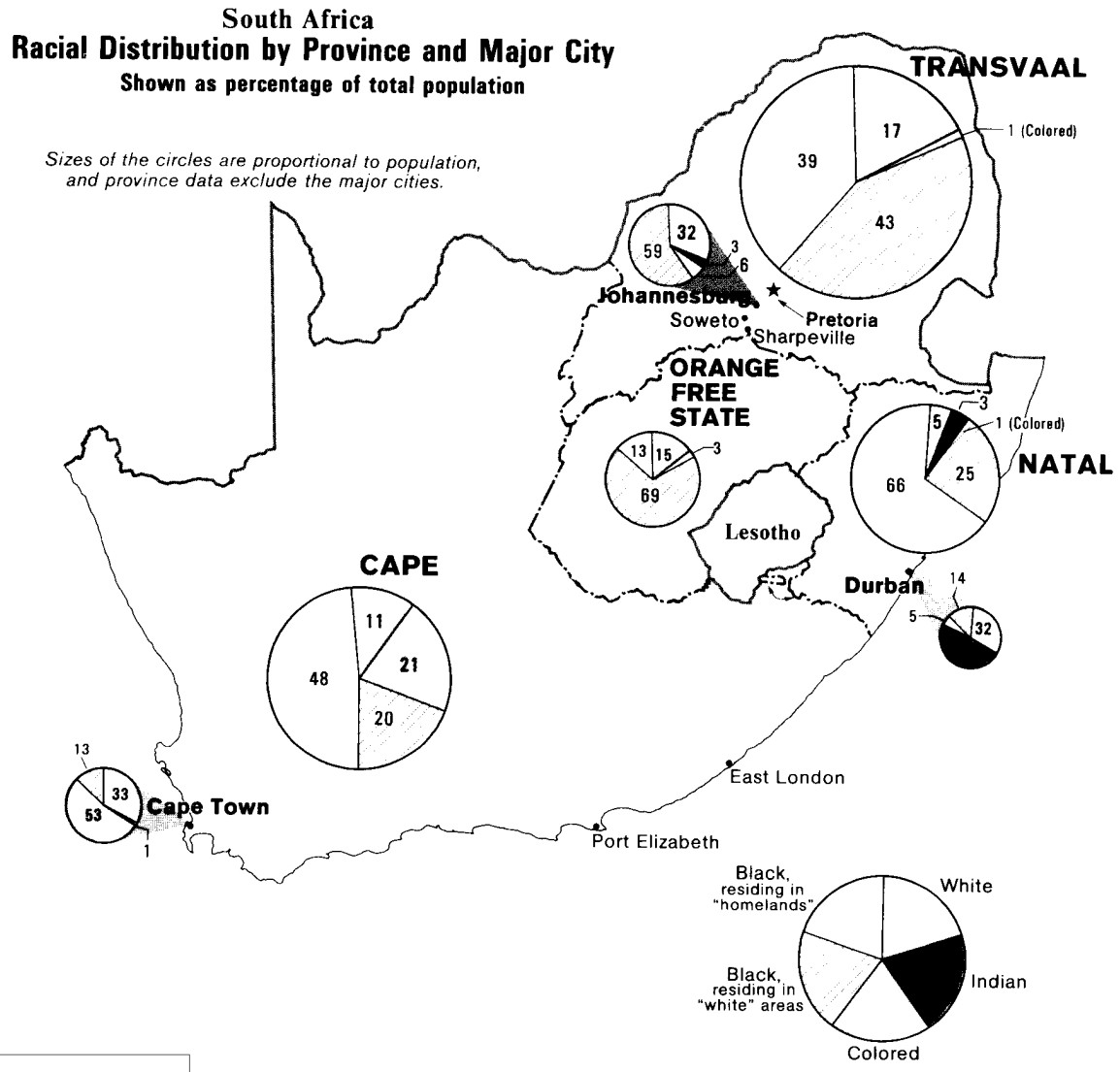
Figure 1



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South Africa: Dynamics and Implications of Racial Demographic Trends

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Introduction

South Africa is a microcosm of world demographic trends. Between now and the year 2000, we expect that 84 percent of the population growth in South Africa will be accounted for by blacks; demographers project that 94 percent of world population growth will take place in the Third World. By contrast, there has been a sharp slowdown in the growth of the white, Colored, and Indian communities in South Africa so that their population profiles are becoming similar to those in the advanced industrialized world.[1]

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The strains facing South Africa from the rapid growth of its black population are similar to those facing Third World countries everywhere—high unemployment, rapid urban growth, growing population pressure on the land, and pressures on a wide range of public services. In South Africa, however, these trends are given a unique twist by the country's political and social structure, which is based on white supremacy and stratified according to race.

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This paper examines the dynamics of population growth in South Africa, analyzes the reasons for different demographic trends among the four main racial groups, and assesses the changing age structure of each group. It also discusses some of the principal social and economic implications of these trends and their potential for straining the ability of whites to maintain control.

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The Dynamics of Population Growth

Major Population Trends According to Race

Blacks. Black fertility has been the engine driving South Africa's overall population growth. The annual rate of natural increase—the excess of births over deaths—among blacks reached a peak of 3.4 percent in the 1960s and since then has fallen to 2.7 percent, still well in excess of the 2.1 percent recorded by the whole of the Third World. As a result, the South African black population surged from 10.9 million in 1960 to 22.7 million today and increased from 68 percent to 73.5 percent of the total population during the same period (see figure 2).

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Historically, black families have been large for reasons of family prestige and tribal power and because of a need for children to provide agricultural labor and to support the elderly. As the proportion of blacks in urban areas has increased, however, the pressures toward large families have become less compelling because of the social and economic changes associated with urbanization.

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By the year 2000, we expect the annual rate of natural increase of blacks to fall to 2.2 percent owing to a large drop in fertility and a modest drop in mortality. The rate would be higher if the South

Table 1
Population Trends in a Nutshell

	Mid-1983		Projected for 2000	
	Million Persons	Percent of Population	Million Persons	Percent of Population
Blacks	22.7	73.5	34.5	76.9
Whites	4.7	15.2	5.8	12.9
Coloreds	2.7	8.7	3.5	7.8
Indians	0.8	2.6	1.1	2.4
Total	**30.9**	**100.0**	**44.9**	**100.0**

Source: US Census Bureau, 1982.

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[1] We use the terms *black* and *white*, respectively, to designate people of African and European origin. We use the South African term *Colored* to refer to people of mixed race; in South Africa, *Colored* also includes ethnic Malays. The term *Asian* generally is used in South Africa to denote people from the Indian subcontinent; we use the term *Indian* to describe this group because there are few other Asians in the country.

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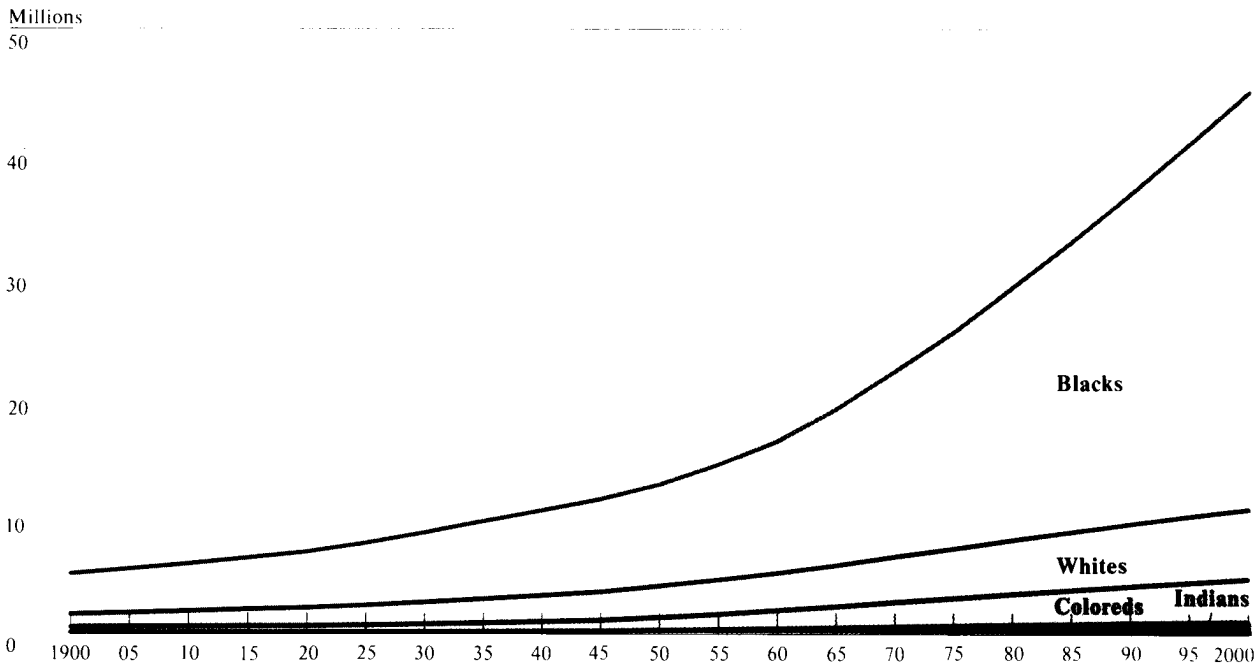
Figure 2
Population, by Race



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African Government undertook a massive effort to improve health conditions among blacks, which would reduce their still relatively high mortality rate. We expect no such intervention, however, because of the cost and because the government has no interest in having the number of blacks rise any faster. Thus, we believe black mortality will continue to decline only slowly.

Whites. The white population is growing slower than any other racial group in South Africa. The rate of natural increase for whites was relatively high from 1900 to 1970, ranging between 1.5 and 2.0 percent annually, largely because of access to relatively good medical care and sanitary living conditions. During the 1970s, widespread use of safe and effective birth control techniques caused the birth rate to fall rapidly. This reduced the annual rate of natural increase among whites by 1980 to about 0.9 percent.

Historically, migration has affected population trends more among the whites than other groups. A net inflow of over 550,000 immigrants accounts for about a fifth of white population growth since 1940. There have been only a few postwar years of net emigration, notably after the Sharpeville massacre of 1960 and following the Soweto riots of 1976. Even so, some (probably mostly English-speakers) [2] of the roughly 325,000 South African whites currently living and working overseas probably have no intention of returning.

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[2] We use the term "English-speakers" to denote whites of British background.

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Table 2
Population Trends, 1900-2100

Million persons

Ethnic Groups	1900	1950	1983	2000 [a]	2050 [a]	2100 [a]
Whites	**1.1**	**2.6**	**4.7**	**5.8**	**7.0**	**7.1**
Afrikaners	0.7	1.5	2.6	3.1	3.4	3.4
English-speakers	0.4	1.1	2.1	2.7	3.6	3.7
Indians	**0.1**	**0.4**	**0.8**	**1.1**	**1.4**	**1.5**
Coloreds	**0.4**	**1.1**	**2.7**	**3.5**	**4.6**	**4.8**
Blacks [b]	**3.5**	**8.4**	**22.7**	**34.5**	**61.3**	**67.5**
Nguni-speakers						
Zulu	1.9	2.3	6.1	9.7	16.8	18.6
Xhosa						
In Transkei	0.7	1.7	4.6	7.1	12.7	14.0
In Ciskei	0.2	0.5	1.4	2.0	3.6	4.0
Swazi	0.1	0.3	0.8	1.2	2.2	2.4
Ndebele	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.9	1.7	1.8
Sotho speakers						
Tswana	0.4	1.0	2.7	4.0	7.2	7.9
Pedi	0.4	1.0	2.7	3.7	6.6	7.3
South Sotho	0.3	0.8	2.2	3.4	6.1	6.7
Venda	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.8	1.4	1.5
Other						
Shangaan	0.2	0.4	1.1	1.7	3.0	3.3
Total	**5.1**	**12.5**	**30.9**	**44.9**	**74.1**	**81.0**

[a] Projected.
[b] Lacking population growth data according to tribe, we have estimated the sizes of each black tribe in the various years by projecting them from the relative proportions of the different tribal groups in the 1970 census at the overall black population growth rate.

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Estimates of the white population in the year 2000 vary, depending on projections of the magnitude and direction of migration (see table 3). In any case, the massive growth of the black population probably will exceed by far any net white immigration.

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The proportion of Afrikaners [3] in the total white population is declining as a result of several factors:

- The birth rate of Afrikaners—still higher than that of English-speaking whites—is falling rapidly as Afrikaners become increasingly urbanized, educated, and wealthy.
- Intermarriage between Afrikaners and English-speaking whites is increasing, and English generally becomes the dominant language of the offspring.
- Most white immigrants are English-speakers or soon become English-speakers.

[3] Afrikaners are the descendants of Dutch immigrants who first settled near the Cape of Good Hope in the 17th century.

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Family Planning

When the first family planning program was started in South Africa during the 1930s, it was aimed at working-class white women. By 1971, however, use of contraceptives among white women had become so widespread that the then Minister of Bantu Affairs, M.C. Botha, called on white women to have more babies in order to counter the high black birth rate.

The government now has over 8,000 family planning clinics scattered throughout the country to facilitate easy access to modern contraceptive services. These clinics are open to all races, but most whites rely on private physicians. South Africa's program is the eighth largest in the world in terms of the number of people served. The government's tactic is to stress the immediate benefits of birth limitation to individuals and families—such as less crowded housing or higher per capita income.

Among women of child-bearing age, whites have the highest rate of contraceptive usage and blacks the lowest, according to an official survey conducted in 1975-76. The survey indicated that 58 percent of the white women used contraceptives. The figures for Colored and Indian women were 51 and 49 percent, respectively, compared with only 17 percent of black women.

Many blacks view family planning as a nefarious scheme concocted by whites to hold down the numbers of blacks in order to maintain white domination. Partially as a result, white efforts to encourage blacks to have fewer children have gone largely unheeded. According to Embassy reporting, many blacks feel they must maintain a high birth rate in order to "swamp" the whites.

If there is no substantial change in present trends, the proportion of whites speaking Afrikaans as their first language—about 56 percent in 1980—would fall by the year 2000 to about 54 percent.

Coloreds. The population growth rate among Coloreds, who now number 2.7 million, has fallen sharply since the 1950s—from an annual rate of natural increase of approximately 3.5 percent to the current rate of 1.8 percent. This change was facilitated by the government's provision of birth control information and materials; Coloreds use contraceptives at a rate second only to whites, according to official South African sources.

Table 3
The White Population in the Year 2000 Under Varying Migration Scenarios [a]

Migration Rate Assumptions	Million Persons	Percent of Population
1. Constant immigration of 32,000 a year	6.0	13.4
2. Steadily dropping immigration, from 32,000 a year to zero in the year 2010	5.8	12.9
3. No net migration	5.4	12.0
4. Constant emigration of 32,000 a year	4.5	10.0

[a] As of mid-1983 there are 4.7 million whites, 15.2 percent of the population.

Because of these trends, we expect the Colored rate of natural increase to decline by the year 2000 to about 1.2 percent annually. Coloreds have remained at a fairly constant proportion of the total population since the turn of the century: 9.5 percent in 1900, 8.9 percent in 1980. Because of their declining rate of natural increase, however, they will fall to about 7.8 percent of South Africa's population, or 3.5 million, by the year 2000.

Indians. The pattern of population growth among the Indians, now some 800,000 persons, has closely paralleled that of the Coloreds except that a surge of immigrants from India during the late 1940s led briefly to an annual growth rate of about 4.6 percent. The Indian rate of natural increase held steady at about 2.5 percent annually from 1950 until 1970, when it began to fall, probably largely because of the availability of more effective birth control techniques.

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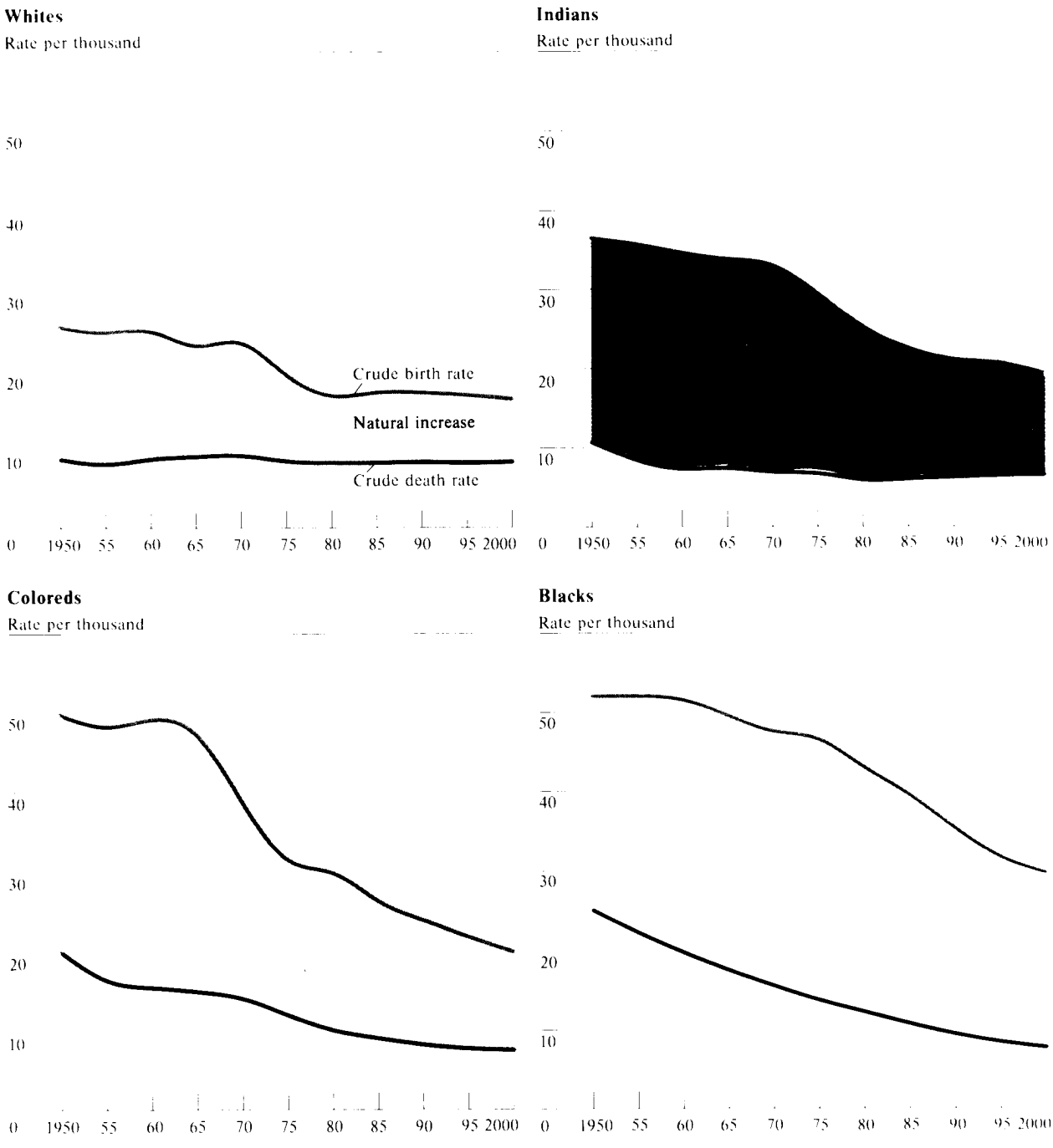
Figure 3
Natural Population Increase



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We expect that the recent drop in the birth rate among Indians will cause the Indian rate of natural increase to decline from 1.7 percent in 1980 to about 1.3 percent annually by the year 2000. Indians have remained a nearly constant portion of the total population throughout this century; according to our projections, they will close it out at almost the same share as in 1900, 2.4 percent (1.1 million persons) of the total.

Other Measures of Population Change

The dynamics of population trends among South Africa's principal racial groups can be measured in other ways. In this section, we examine four of the most important underlying indicators of the changing population structure: infant mortality, life expectancy, median age, and age structure.

Infant Mortality. Improvements in sanitation, medical care, and nutrition over the past three decades have caused declines in the infant mortality rates (IMR) for each of the four main racial groups (see table 4). The absolute decline varies substantially according to race, however, because of the vastly different IMR of each race at the initial point of comparison—in this case 1950.

Further reductions in the IMR for whites probably will be achieved by better control of serious childhood disease and use of more sophisticated medical technology. The IMR among whites was already low in 1950 because whites had long enjoyed good basic health care and more than adequate nutrition.

The IMR for Indians, approximately double that of whites in 1950, improved by 60 percent between 1950 and 1980, faster than that of any other race. Indians have long had access to reasonably good medical care and adequate nutrition, and they are likely to make further gains for the same reasons as those that apply to whites.

Coloreds and blacks have the highest IMRs, but these are falling and we expect them to continue to fall owing to better nutrition and sanitation and relatively simple improvements in health care. Even so, malnutrition and inadequate medical care will probably continue to keep the black IMR relatively high.

Table 4
Infant Mortality Rate

Rate per 1,000 persons

Year	White	Indian	Colored	Black
1950	35	66	132	201
1960	27	60	126	147
1970	22	34	121	135
1980	18	26	82	107
1990	14	23	63	83
2000	11	19	47	63
Change	**24**	**47**	**85**	**138**

Source: US Census Bureau, 1982.

Life Expectancy. The increased life expectancy of all races over the past 30 years is a sign of improvement in the overall health of the population (see table 5). The potential for improvement in life expectancy is naturally greatest among those groups that begin with short life expectancies because they have more room for improvement. Over the long term, differences in life expectancy will tend to even out because devastating diseases such as tuberculosis, which have affected blacks more than any other group, are becoming less and less common.

We expect South African whites to increase their life expectancy the least. Even so, by the year 2000, we believe it will be only slightly less than that of most advanced countries in Western Europe and the United States.

We expect that South Africa's Indians, who in 1950 had a life expectancy well below that of whites, will gain substantially relative to whites by the year 2000. Nutritional, sanitation, and medical care improvements that have already led to increased life expectancies among Indians will bring them close to the level of whites by the year 2000.

Blacks and Coloreds are expected to make the greatest gains in part because their life expectancies were so low in 1950. After the year 2000, their gains

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Table 5
Life Expectancy at Birth

Years

Year of birth	White	Indian	Colored	Black
1950	66.9	54.4	45.5	43.9
1960	67.9	58.6	52.1	47.3
1970	68.0	61.4	54.3	51.6
1980	69.8	64.1	56.6	55.6
1990	71.5	66.1	60.7	60.0
2000	72.8	68.2	64.4	63.9
Change	**5.9**	**13.8**	**18.9**	**20.0**

Source: US Census Bureau, 1982.

Table 6
Median Age

Years

Year	White	Indian	Colored	Black
1980	28.1	20.2	19.2	18.0
1985	28.3	21.2	20.0	18.2
1990	28.6	22.8	21.1	18.7
1995	30.2	24.4	23.3	19.1
2000	31.8	26.3	25.5	19.2
Change	**3.7**	**6.1**	**6.3**	**1.2**

Source: US Census Bureau, 1982.

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relative to whites and Indians will be much smaller because by then we expect considerable improvement in public health facilities serving blacks and Coloreds.

Median Age. Differences in the median age (the age at which half a population is younger and half older) of South Africa's main racial groups largely reflect the differences in their respective rates of fertility and mortality (see table 6). The relatively high median age of whites is a function of low fertility and low mortality. Although changes in the mortality of Coloreds and Indians will be modest, the anticipated further decline in their fertility will substantially increase their median age. The median age of blacks is likely to change only slightly, however, because—as with whites—the gap between their birth and death rates is not changing much.

Age Structure. The rapid drop in the birth rates of whites, Coloreds, and Indians in recent decades is causing their age structures to begin to resemble those in the advanced industrialized countries of the West and Japan. By contrast, the birth rate and age structure of South Africa's blacks are more typical of those in the Third World.

By the year 2000, the abrupt drop in fertility among whites that took place in the 1970s will have dramatically altered their age structure (see figure 4). We expect a slight bulge in those under age 15 owing to the comparatively larger childbearing population over age 25 at that time.

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The fertility decline that began among the Coloreds in the 1960s has already altered their age structure and will alter it even more by the year 2000. As can be seen in figure 5, the number of Coloreds under age 15 is not increasing. We expect Colored fertility to remain low, so that by the year 2000 there will be approximately the same number of Coloreds of every age under 40.

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The decline in fertility among Indians occurred about a decade later than that among the Coloreds, and we project that by the end of this century the proportion of Indians in each 5-year age group under age 30 will be approximately equal (see figure 6). At that time, the number of Indians will be increasing by 1.3 percent annually but, because of lengthening life expectancy, the number over age 65 will be growing by nearly 5 percent annually.

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We do not expect the age structure of blacks to change much over the next 17 years (see figure 7) because we foresee only very gradual declines in their rates of fertility and mortality. Each year more black babies will be born than in the previous year, and we expect this still to be the pattern in the year 2000. Between now and then, there will be a massive numerical increase of 4.0 million persons among black

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Figure 4
Whites, by Age and Sex

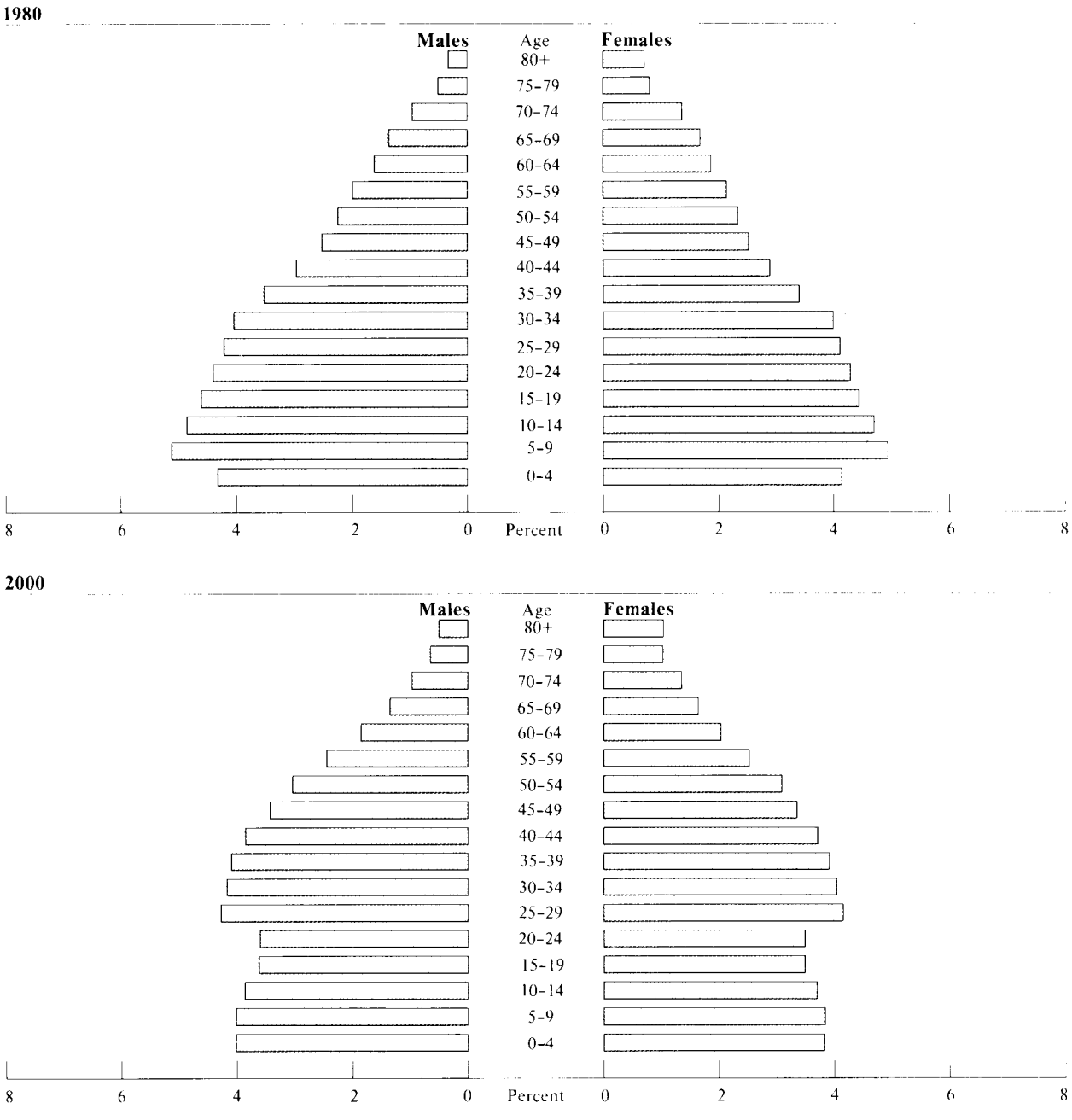

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Figure 5
Coloreds, by Age and Sex

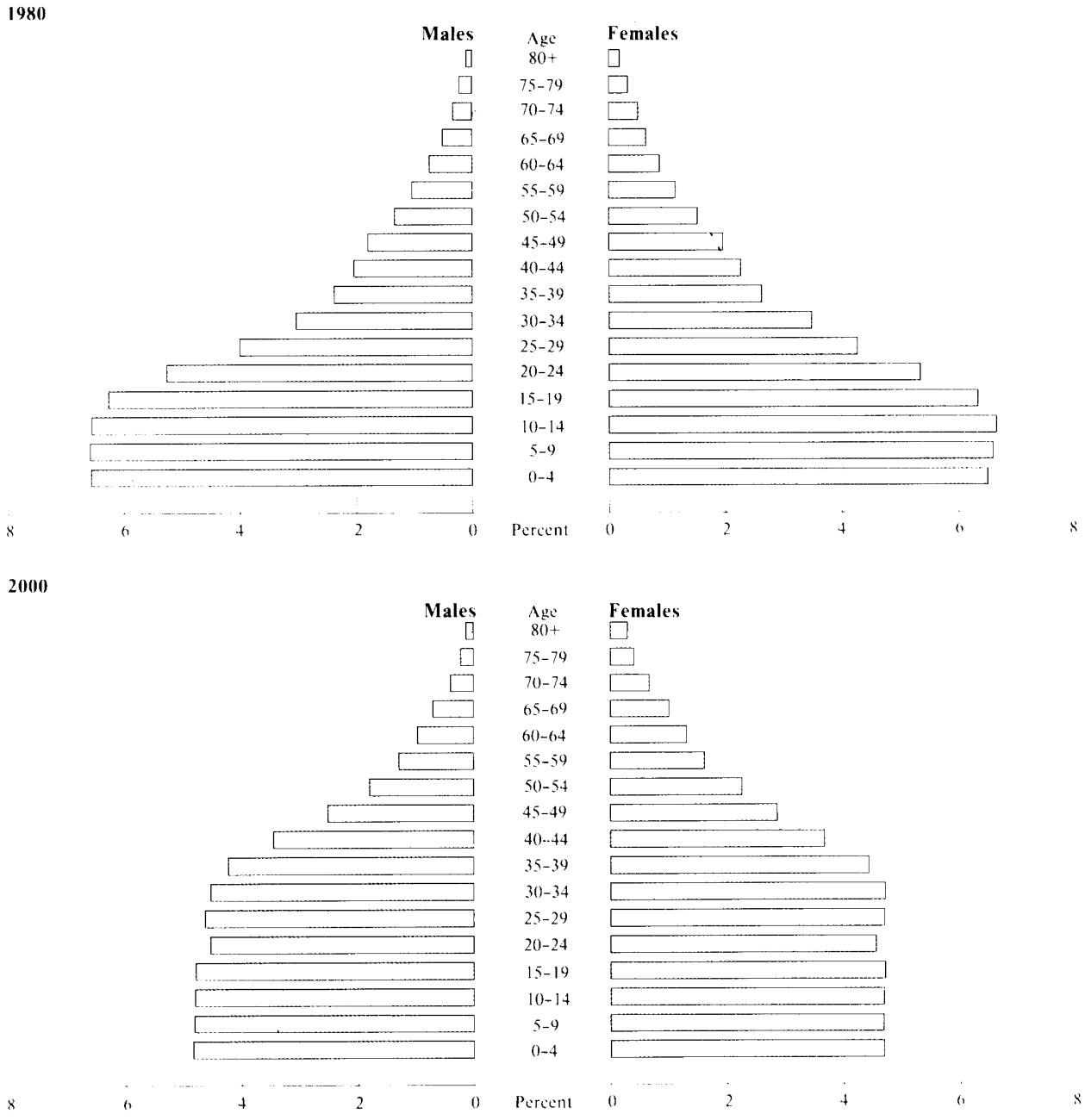

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Figure 6
Indians, by Age and Sex

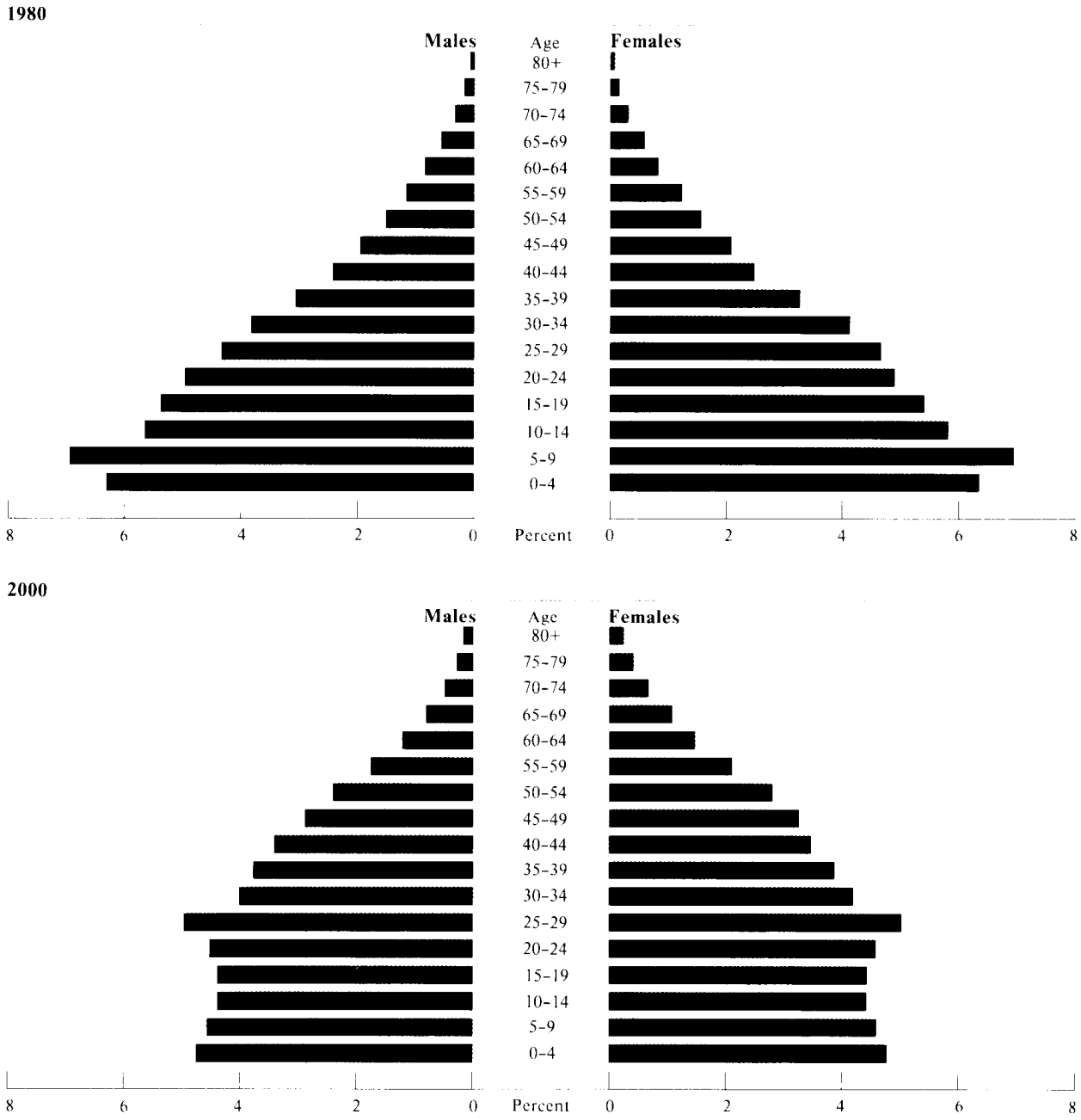

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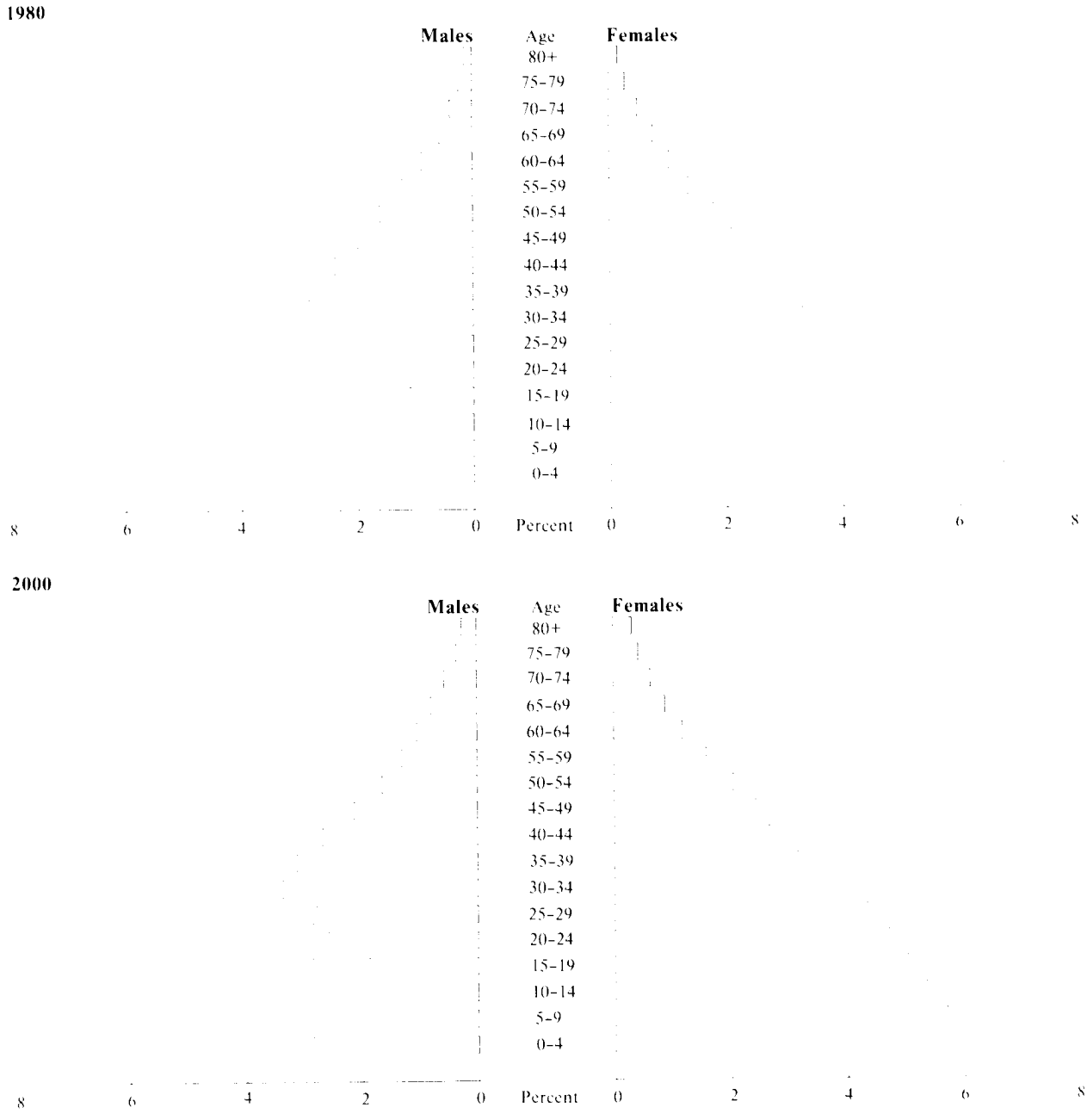
Figure 7
Blacks, by Age and Sex



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youth ages 6 to 18. Moreover, because aged blacks will be dying at an ever slower pace, the rate at which the number of blacks over age 65 is increasing will rise from an average of 2.9 percent annually now to 3.6 percent.

The changing age structures of the four principal racial groups will affect the relative proportion of the total population that each group represents. The proportion of the total population under age 20 that is black will increase between now and the year 2000 from 77.7 to 82.7 percent because of the rapid decline in fertility experienced by whites, Coloreds, and Asians and the continued high birth rate among blacks. Because of changing mortality patterns, the proportion of blacks in the total population age 65 and up will increase from 60.1 percent in 1983 to 64.5 percent by the year 2000.

Table 7
Employment and Population Growth, 1970-80

Average Annual Growth in Percent

	Employment [a]	Population
White	2.1	1.7
Indian	3.3	2.4
Colored	3.5	2.2
Black	2.3	3.1

[a] Wage earners only.

Sources: South African Central Statistical Service, 1981, and US Census Bureau, 1982.

Related Social and Economic Problems

Most of the problems caused by the dynamics of population growth in South Africa are essentially problems related to the black population. In a broader sense, however, these problems affect all the races because in the long run they could determine whether or not the whites are able to maintain control. In the discussion that follows, we examine the impact of South African population trends on unemployment, housing and public services, and the land. We also point to the potential these problems have for causing instability.

Jobs and Economic Growth

Unemployment in South Africa is essentially a black problem; white unemployment is less than 1 percent, and Colored and Indian rates are not significantly higher. During the 1970s, the number of employed whites, Coloreds, and Indians grew faster than the total population of each of these groups, but the black population grew significantly faster than the number of wage-earning blacks (see table 7). We believe—based on recent Embassy reporting and our own analyses—that approximately 30 percent of South Africa's black population is unemployed.

We expect that black unemployment will rise steadily because economic growth will be insufficient to absorb continuing large additions to the labor force. We believe real economic growth will average 3 to 4 percent annually over the near term,[4] substantially lower than the 6-percent rate that Pretoria estimates to be necessary to absorb the number of blacks entering the job market each year. That number is currently about 225,000, but by the year 2000 it will be about 350,000. Even if the rate of economic growth exceeds our expectations and rises to 5 percent annually between now and the year 2000, black unemployment would climb to at least 35 percent.

We do not anticipate a concerted effort by the South African regime to create more jobs for blacks. Rather, we expect the government to continue to rely essentially on the normal course of economic expansion for the creation of new jobs.

Pressures on Housing and Public Services

Black population growth will in our judgment aggravate an already serious housing shortage—particularly in urban areas—and severely strain the country's overburdened public services.

Housing. We expect the number of urban blacks—currently 9.1 million, or 40 percent of the black population and about 57 percent of the total urban

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population—to continue to expand at a minimum rate of 4.0 percent annually at least until the year 2000. The increase would be a function of both natural increase and rural-to-urban migration. Future growth could be well above 4 percent if Pretoria relaxes restrictions on black access to "white cities." [5]

The current housing shortage in urban areas—estimated by a South African research organization to be about 600,000 units—is exacerbated by a need for an additional 100,000 units annually just to keep up with black population growth. The need may be even greater because the 600,000 figure may underestimate the seriousness of existing overcrowding among blacks. The number of occupants per dwelling unit in black townships averages seven in areas near Pretoria and goes up to 16 near East London.

About 135,000 new units would be required annually from now to the year 2000 to make up for a backlog of even the above magnitude. Although the government is gradually allowing the private sector to do more to provide urban housing for blacks, there is little chance that these needs will be met. Construction alone would require an annual capital outlay of about $1.35 billion, equal to approximately 7 percent of the current South African budget.

Education. A key public service problem that extends far beyond the urban areas is the provision of adequate education to blacks. The huge increase in the number of school-age black children (ages 6 to 18) will generate considerable demand for more schools and teachers. Because white, Colored, and Indian school-age children have reached almost zero population growth, blacks will account for more than 99 percent of the increase in this group between now and the year 2000 (see table 9).

The number of blacks in school is also increasing because of the general trend among black students to stay in school longer. For example, the number of

[5] The term *white cities* derives from laws that have long restricted black access to cities in South Africa. As a result of this body of legislation, blacks cannot legally reside in cities without permission. Residence permits are granted only to blacks with jobs. They are revoked if a black loses his or her job. Black visitors to a city must obtain a permit for a stay of more than 72 hours.

Table 8
Urban Population, 1950-2000

Thousands (except where noted)

Year	White	Indian	Colored	Black
1950	1,995 (77) [a]	264 (76) [a]	674 (63) [a]	2,184 (26) [a]
1960	2,582 (84)	397 (83)	1,031 (68)	3,471 (32)
1970	3,274 (87)	547 (89)	1,520 (74)	5,070 (33)
1980	3,871 (87)	725 (91)	1,976 (77)	7,943 (38)
1990 projected	4,536 (88)	868 (92)	2,446 (80)	12,275 (45)
2000 projected	5,140 (89)	1,010 (93)	2,922 (83)	20,677 (60)

[a] Percentage in urban areas.

Source: US Census Bureau, 1982.

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black students in the 12th grade has more than tripled in the last five years. Even so, only about 5 percent of black students currently make it to the 12th grade, compared with about 62 percent of white students.

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Compulsory education began in 1982 for black children, but it was confined only to the lower grades and a few locations. According to the government's current plans, compulsory education will not apply to blacks of high school age until 1990. Only 56 percent of black school-age children attended any school at all in 1980, compared with 96 percent of white and 88 percent of both the Colored and Indian school-age children.

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We believe that South African whites and other nonblack taxpayers would balk at tax increases of a magnitude that would bring black education to anywhere near the quality available to whites. The government's widely publicized commitment to improving black education nevertheless is being supported by

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Table 9
School-Age Population

Thousands, ages 6 to 18

Year	Total	White	Indian	Colored	Black	Percent of Blacks in the School-Age Population
1980	8,676	1,113	249	871	6,443	74.3
1985	9,554	1,121	264	861	7,309	76.5
1990	10,750	1,089	266	861	8,534	79.4
1995	11,818	1,068	251	863	9,636	81.5
2000	12,718	1,131	251	870	10,466	82.3
Change	**4,042**	**18**	**2**	**−1**	**4,023**	

Source: US Census Bureau, 1982.

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an 18-percent increase in the budget for black primary- and secondary-level education for fiscal year 1983/84. According to Pretoria's own figures, however, spending per black pupil is only about $175 a year, about 10 percent of the amount spent per white student.

Other Public Services. Only a small portion of South African blacks have access to public utilities such as piped water, sewerage, or electricity. In Soweto, the largest South African black city, perhaps 15 percent of the houses have indoor plumbing and 20 to 25 percent have electricity. The rest rely on outside faucets and toilets—the latter connected to an overloaded waterborne sewage system—and on coal and oil for cooking, heating, and lighting. Residents of other black townships, moreover, have complained that Soweto has received the lion's share of public utility investments since the riots there in 1976. Few rural blacks have houses with running water, indoor toilets, or electricity.

In South Africa, the quality of health care is largely determined by race. The doctor-patient ratio varies between 1 to 600 (comparable to that in the United States) among whites and 1 to 40,000 (comparable to that in Chad) in the black homelands.[6] Overall, there is about one doctor per 2,000 persons in South Africa—substantially less than the average of one per 1,500 persons reported in World Bank data for countries with roughly the same per capita income.

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A small number of young, mostly English-speaking, white doctors have emigrated because they are discouraged about South Africa's future and are attracted by higher income elsewhere. This has begun to cause shortages even in hospitals reserved for whites; staff shortages of up to 40 percent have been reported.

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Pressures on the Land

Demographic trends will add to existing population pressures in the homelands, where about half of the black population lives. The forced removal of from 2.3 to 3.5 million blacks from "white cities" to the homelands since 1948—in addition to normal population growth—has caused severe overcrowding there. If the government tightens "influx controls" into the cities, demographic pressures will aggravate social and economic problems in the homelands.

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South Africa has expanded food production only a little faster than necessary to keep up with population growth. Per capita production increased by only 2 percent in the 1970s, according to the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations.

[6] Every black is assigned to one of the 10 "homelands" that make up about 13 percent of the land in South Africa. Four of the homelands have been granted "independence," but no country except South Africa recognizes them.

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Although about 20 percent of the food produced in South Africa is normally exported, many South African blacks suffer from nutritional deficiencies because they cannot afford to buy the food they need. Because of severe drought during the past two years, South Africa will import large amounts of food this year.

Because of population growth and increasing water use per capita, South Africa will be forced to make full use of its surface water resources by about the year 2005, according to an official South African report issued in 1970. Without strict conservation measures, the day of reckoning could arrive as soon as the early 1990s. South Africa is a water-short country because most people live on the dry interior plateau, whereas approximately 85 percent of the surface runoff occurs along the coast. Moreover, ground water supplies are severely limited because of the impermeable nature of the underlying rock formations.

Potential for Instability

Because of the many problems that continued expansion of the black population will cause, we believe that social tensions will intensify and make South Africa more dangerous for people of all races. To date, the pattern of racial unrest has been one of largely spontaneous local eruptions over specific local grievances –most frequently related to housing, public transportation, labor, and school issues. Lacking overall leadership, the disturbances generally have been easily contained and quelled by the police. As the black population grows, however, and pressures on the land, the cities, and public services intensify, the pace and scope of unrest are likely to increase. Poor and scarce housing, unemployment, and shortages of goods and possibly even food could spark spontaneous rioting at any time, and over time activists probably will also develop greater ability to organize and plan acts of protest, perhaps on a wide scale.

In our judgment, black education in particular will remain a potentially explosive issue—the uprising in the black township of Soweto near Johannesburg in June 1976 was triggered by an official attempt to compel blacks to study Afrikaans and was sustained for months largely by disgruntled secondary school students and dropouts. Even if Pretoria carries out its promises of better education for blacks, the chances for at least sporadic violence will probably increase because of heightened black consciousness of their inferior social, economic, and political status.

The President's Council on South Africa's Demographic Trends

The recently released Demographic Report of the Scientific Committee of the South African President's Council paints a bleak picture of population trends in South Africa.

Reflecting long-held worries of South African demographers, the report contends that the population will reach the maximum sustainable level, given South Africa's limited water resources, soon after the year 2020 unless the government promptly invests a lot of money in development and family planning. The thesis of the report is that South Africa faces the choice of paying now to slow population growth or paying much more later—and the implication is that, if it chooses to pay later, it will pay in a lot more than money.

In addition to a bold program of family planning, the report prescribes:

- *Massive rural development assistance for blacks to slow the pace of rural-to-urban migration.*
- *Raising the level of adult literacy.*
- *Providing mass education for children of all races as well as improved health care and nutrition for people of all ages.*
- *Better housing.*

In other developing countries, social and economic improvements have consistently reduced mortality before fertility. We believe, therefore, that if these prescriptions are implemented, black mortality would drop faster than black fertility. This would lead to a higher rate of natural increase for at least a decade, until black fertility began to fall.

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In our view, the most disruptive single group is likely to be composed of young black males, whose ranks in the 15 to 24 age group are expanding at a rate of 3.0 percent annually (see table 10). Dissidents from this group led the rioting in Soweto and they probably provide the bulk of recruits for South African black nationalist groups.

Even though the government's security apparatus is likely to be able to thwart any internal challenge in the near term, the potential for violence and eventual instability will increase as the black population swells and social and economic strains intensify.

Demographic trends will also make it difficult—though not necessarily impossible—for the white-dominated South African power structure to enforce the complex system of laws designed to maintain white control. Even now, the segment of the white population that has the skills needed to run the government, private enterprise, and other key South African institutions is remarkably small: only 2 percent of the adult whites in South Africa were university graduates as of 1970, compared with 17 percent for all adults as of 1980 in the United States. Eventually, there may not be enough qualified whites to do all these things. Moreover, if the security situation in South Africa deteriorates seriously, we believe that many whites—especially English-speakers—would emigrate, thus worsening the shortage of skilled personnel and making it even more difficult for the whites to maintain control.

Table 10
Young Males

Thousands
Ages 15 to 24

Year	White	Indian	Colored	Black
1980	403	82	295	2,096
1985	435	87	325	2,303
1990	461	99	332	2,564
1995	445	104	326	3,008
2000	418	97	329	3,487
Change	**15**	**15**	**34**	**1,391**

Source: US Census Bureau, 1982.

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Appendix

Notes on Methodology

The projections used in this report were made by the US Bureau of the Census at our request and are based on the South African censuses of 1950, 1960, and 1970; preliminary census data for 1980; and official South African population surveys in 1976 and 1979. Data for the pre-1950 period were obtained from official South African sources.

Data Base

The quality of South African census data varies according to race. For whites, Coloreds, and Indians, the data are of high and uniform quality because of rigorous official enumeration standards and the use of the same census questionnaire for all three racial groups. Also, birth and death registrations are nearly complete for these groups. We have little data, however, on demographic differences between English- and Afrikaans-speaking whites.

For blacks, the data are of lower quality in part because of the South African Government's less rigorous enumeration procedures. Moreover, birth and death registration data for blacks are incomplete, and underenumeration is common because many blacks fear government officials. We have data on the total numbers in each black tribe as of 1970 but no fertility and mortality data according to tribe.

Projection Methodology

The US Census Bureau made three projections for each South African group—a high, medium, and low series, as shown in table A-1—based on different fertility and mortality assumptions and, for the white projections, different assumptions about migration. In this paper, we use the medium series except for the Coloreds for whom we use the low series because their fertility rate is already approaching that of zero population growth.

The Census Bureau assumed that the white birth rate will remain constant because in 1980 the average number of children born per woman was at a very low 2.0 (the current US rate is 1.9). Any further decline would, over the long run, lead to a drop in white population. Even at constant fertility, the white population will still grow owing to a slight increase in life expectancy and a drop from the current infant mortality rate of 17 per 1,000 (the US rate is 12 per 1,000).

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The Census Bureau projected that the average number of children born per black woman will continue to decline at a slow but steady pace from 5.8 in 1980 to 3.9 in the year 2000. We expect that health and sanitary conditions will continue to improve slowly but steadily, though not at a uniform rate throughout the country. Improvements will almost certainly be greatest in urban areas and least in the homelands. The Census Bureau projected the black mortality rate to fall from 40 in 1980 to 30 in the year 2000. It projected the currently high black infant mortality rate to fall from 107 to 63 by the turn of the century. Life expectancy at birth, given these mortality changes, would rise from 56 to 64 years. The Census Bureau did not factor black migration into its projections because historically it has not been important.

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Colored fertility began to decline rapidly in the 1970s, and the Census Bureau projected that it will continue to fall: declining from an average of 3.4 children born to Colored women in 1980 to 2.2 in the year 2000. The Census Bureau projected that the Colored infant mortality rate will drop from 82 in 1980 to 47 in the year 2000 and that Colored life expectancy will increase to 64 years, up from 57 years in 1980.

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The Census Bureau projected the average number of children born to Indian women to fall from 2.8 in 1980 to 2.1 in the year 2000. Indian mortality is already low and will remain so. The Census Bureau projected the Indian infant mortality rate to fall from 26 in 1980 to 19 in the year 2000 and Indian life expectancy to increase from the current 64 years to 68 years at the end of the century.

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Table A-1
Selected Population Projections

Thousands
(except where noted)

Midyear	White	Indian	Colored	Black	Total	Growth Rate [a] *(percent)*
High Series						
(Assumes a constant rate of net immigration of whites of 32,000 per year.)						
1980	4,462	797	2,562	20,903	28,724	
1985	4,827	876	2,836	24,116	32,655	2.6
1990	5,241	960	3,142	27,852	37,195	2.6
1995	5,688	1,050	3,457	32,058	42,253	2.6
2000	6,142	1,142	3,766	36,762	47,812	2.5
Medium Series						
(Assumes steadily declining net immigration of whites from 32,000 in 1981 to zero in 2010.)						
1980	4,462	797	2,562	20,903	28,724	
1985	4,809	872	2,825	23,971	32,477	2.5
1990	5,154	943	3,099	27,278	36,474	2.3
1995	5,482	1,015	3,376	30,774	40,647	2.2
2000	5,775	1,086	3,643	34,462	44,966	2.0
Low Series						
(Assumes steadily declining net immigration of whites from 32,000 in 1981 to zero in 2010.)						
1980	4,462	797	2,562	20,903	28,724	
1985	4,802	870	2,813	23,777	32,262	2.3
1990	5,125	935	3,057	26,467	35,584	2.0
1995	5,415	998	3,294	28,935	38,642	1.6
2000	5,659	1,059	3,520	31,288	41,526	1.4

[a] Average annual growth for all races combined.

Source: US Census Bureau, 1982.

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